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NEWS RELEASE

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SEPTEMBER 1 SET AS NEW OPEN ENROLLMENT DATE FOR EXPANSION OF CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM

Working families have from September 1 to September 14 to apply for the Access Card/CHIP B health insurance plans.

The new open enrollment period was moved up to coincide with the beginning of school. The first open enrollment ended July 16, with applications for more than 2,700 children — well below the 5,600 who could enroll in the program. In addition, many of those who applied are not eligible because their families have existing health coverage.

“An early count suggests that about half of the applicants have been denied largely because they already have health insurance,” says Terry Higbee, program supervisor. “This program is for families who don’t have health insurance.”

“If a family’s situation changes,” says Higbee, “they may certainly reapply in the next open enrollment. We know that incomes change, company policies change and people sometimes lose their insurance. The important thing is that children get the health insurance they need. If they were turned down in the first go-around and think they now qualify they should re-apply. ”

The Access Card is a premium assistance program for families who prefer to obtain health coverage through a private insurance company or through their employer. Income can be up to 185 percent of the federal poverty level. A family using the Access Card receives up to \$100 per child per month (maximum of \$300 per family) to help purchase insurance.

CHIP B is low cost health coverage for Idaho children who don't have insurance and don't qualify for Idaho Medicaid or CHIP A. Income can be up to 185 percent of the federal poverty level. CHIP B costs \$15 per child each month. Children up to age 19 within income guidelines may be eligible.

Families interested in signing up for the insurance during the open enrollment period for the Access Card and CHIP B must submit their application during the September 1-14 time frame or wait until the next open enrollment. Additional information can be obtained by contacting your insurance agent, Idaho Careline at 2-1-1, or going to this internet website: www.idahohealth.org.

(Editors: For additional information contact Ross Mason in Boise at 334-0693)